

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,747,924 to Muramatsu.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Muramatsu.

Claims 1-6 are objected to because of informalities.

Claims 5-6 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 7 is allowed.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have canceled claims 1 and 3 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicants have amended claims 2 and 4-6.

Claims 2 and 4-7 are pending.

The Information Disclosure Statements

Applicants filed two Information Disclosure Statements (IDS) dated January 3, 2001 and May 30, 2003, respectively. However, Applicants only received an Examiner-initialed form PTO-1449 for the IDS filed on May 30, 2003 with the instant Office Action. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner evidence consideration of the documents listed on the form PTO-1449 filed on January 3, 2001 by initializing the form and returning a copy to Applicants with the next Office communication.

All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5 and 6 are objected to because of informalities. Claims 5-6 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 7 is allowed.

Applicants respectfully thank the Examiner for allowing claim 7 and for the indication of allowable subject matter recited in claims 5 and 6. Applicants have amended claims 5 and 6 to address the Examiner's concerns recited at paragraph 2 of the Office Action. Applicants have rewritten claims 5 and 6 in independent form including all of the limitations of the respective base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 5-6 are in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the objections to claims 5-6 is requested.

Claims 1, 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Muramatsu. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Muramatsu. Claims 1-4 are objected to because of informalities. Applicants have canceled claims 1 and 3 without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering the rejection and objection of claims 1 and 3 moot. Applicants have amended claims 2 and 4 to be dependent from claim 5. Dependent claims 2 and 4 recite the same combination of allowable features recited in claim 5, as well as additional features that define over the prior art. Accordingly, it is requested that the rejection and objection, of claims 2 and 4, be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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